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## Research Article

# THE ISLAMIC SHURA SYSTEM AND THE WESTERN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS: SYNERGISM FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND CREDIBLE LEADERSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

It is an uncontroverted fact that the concept of leadership continues to change. Times were, when it was all about 'leaders are born'. A position premised on the fact that there are traits that marked a leader, and that these are hereditary. Scholars have argued that hereditary traits alone cannot produce good leaders. While some argue in favour of charisma as a basic determinant of leadership, others view style, skills, knowledge and competence as critical components of leadership. Complementing these thoughts, this paper posits that aside the above mentioned determinants, the process through which a leader is selected or elected remains critical in determining the quality of leadership. Anchoring on this position, the paper therefore examines the *modus operandi* of the Islamic Shura system of selecting leaders vis-à-vis the Western democratic process of electing leaders. To achieve this, the paper adopts the use of the secondary data and literatures from journals, textbooks, other literary materials relevant to the subject matter; and personal observation. Based on its findings, the paper concludes that producing a good leader is a function of the process of election or selection among other determinants, and that the process remains critical. Among other recommendations, the paper suggests that, though most modern democracies are secular, the Islamic Shura system of selecting leaders, if synergized with the Western Democratic process of electing leaders, will produce better, morally upright and selfless leaders, needed to challenge the ills in the society, while in the same token, produces good governance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Many contemporary Islamic scholars have compared the concept of *Shura* to the principles of western parliamentary democracy. To these scholars, the principle of *Shura* in Islam is predicated on three basic precepts. First, that all persons in any given society are equal in human and civil rights. Second, is that public issues are best decided by majority view. And third, that the three other principles of justice, equality and human dignity, which constitute Islam's moral core, are best realized, in personal as well as public life, under *Shura* governance (Sadek, 1992).

However, other modern Muslim thinkers have distanced themselves from democracy. They believe that *Shura* is important and part of the ruling structures of the Islamic state, but not one of its pillars. This is because the *Shura* (consultation) in Islam is for seeking the opinion and not for ruling. This is contrary to the parliamentary system in western democracy (Taqiuddin-an-Nabhani, 2002). Although scholars differ over the mechanism for the implementation of this principle in terms of being optional, preferable or obligatory, they are unanimous on the need to realize it among Muslims (Al- Qurtubi, 2008). This position is premised on the fact that Allah says in Q3: 159: *And consult them in affairs of moment*. Contrary to the positions held by most of these Islamic scholars, most western democratic scholars believe that the Islamic

*Shura* system is best suited for the Islamic states. This in fact is a statement of truth since most secular democracies of the world, Nigeria inclusive, are usually Islam-phobic in nature. However, the fear of Islam should not blind us from seeing the goods that comes with this ancient of time system of governance and electing leaders. If truly democracy is a system of government in which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through elected representatives (Anamgba, 2001), it thus means that democracy and *Shura* remains compatible, since the two concepts share common features which includes, 'consultation' and 'representation' in governance; and election of leaders.

Moreover, the question of compatibility concerning the two concepts is actually not expected to throw up much sensation, since "The Islamic culture and civilization as a whole was the source of inspiration and source of information for principles and rules on which the Western civilization built its laws and rules" (Mahmūd, 1994), and that, "What we call today knowledge and its principles, appeared today from the spirit of new research and new ways that have been developed from the examples of what happened before, and the scales of the past and the precedents of the past, and all these principles and rules and scientific curricula, were brought to the European world by the Arabs." (Briffault, 1919). If, therefore, the issue of compatibility is laid to rest, what should pre occupy our minds as researchers, which incidentally coincides with the basic

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objectives of this study, could be found, if the following research questions are adequately answered. The questions are as follows:

1. Is Islam really compatible with democracy?
2. To what extent can the principles of *Shura* be injected into the contemporary secular democracy?
3. Can a synergy of these two far apart concepts produce a more robust paradigm needed for good governance; and a better process of selecting or electing credible leaders?
4. And how achievable is this synergy, especially in the face of constant calls by most nations to embrace secularism?

To these ends, and in pursuit of the overall objective of this study, the paper is divided into eight sections. This section, which is the introductory section, is followed by section two, which explores literatures relevant to the subject matter. The third section explains the Conceptual and Theoretical frameworks. The method of analysis for this study is explained in section four. While the fifth section explains the democratic ethos inherent in Islam, the sixth section x-rays the principles of *Shura* as practiced in Islam. Section seven analyses how the synergy between the two concepts is expected to produce a better paradigm needed for good governance, credible leaders and discusses the findings, while the last section contains conclusion and recommendations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of *Shura* in Islam has generated lots of polemics around the world. Extant literatures on this concept reveals that most Islamic and Western scholars are in agreement on the fact that, embedded in the Islamic *Shura* system are democratic ethos, which if laced with the western democratic process, could make the world a more wonderful haven. However, these scholars are not in agreement over its applicability, especially with respect to the issue of secularism that comes with modernity. Fundamentally, we must be clear at the on-set of our analysis that the concept of *Shura* in Islam can never be well understood in isolation of 'Islamic Democracy'. Islamic democracy refers to a political ideology that seeks to apply Islamic principles to public policy within a democratic framework. Islamic political theory specifies three basic features of an Islamic democracy: leaders must be elected by the people, subject to Sharia and committed to practicing "*Shura*", a special form of consultation practiced by Muhammad, which one can find in various hadiths, with their community (Ghadbian, 2006). Countries which fulfilled the three basic features include Pakistan, Iran and Malaysia amongst others. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are examples of countries that do not adhere to the principles of Islamic democracy despite being Islamic countries, as these countries do not hold elections. The expression of Islamic democracy is different in the Muslim majority countries, as Sharia interpretations vary from country to country, and the use of Sharia is more comprehensive in countries in which Sharia forms the basis for state laws.

However, note that most scholarly efforts which links *Shura*, as enshrined in the Islamic democracy, to the Western democracy, exegetes the compatibility of Islam with democracy or the adaptability of the Islamic *Shura* ethos to western democracy. A large literature has developed arguing that Islam has all the ingredients of modern state and society. Many Muslim intellectuals seek to prove that Islam enshrines democratic

values. But rather than lead the debate, they often follow it, peppering their own analyses with references to Western scholars, who cast aside traditional Orientalism for the theories of the late literary theorist and polemicist Edward Said. Some Western researchers support the Islamist claim that parliamentary democracy and representative elections are not only compatible with Islamic law, but that Islam actually encourages democracy. (Bukay, 2007).

Among the best known advocates of the idea that Islam both is compatible and encourages democracy is John L. Esposito. Esposito and his various co-authors build their arguments upon tendentious assumptions and platitudes such as "democracy has many and varied meanings;" (Esposito, 1992) "every culture will mold an independent model of democratic government;" and "there can develop a religious democracy." (Esposito and Voll, 1996). He argues that "Islamic movements have internalized the democratic discourse through the concepts of *Shura* [consultation], *ijma'* [consensus], and *ijtihad* [independent interpretive judgment]" (Esposito and Piscatory, 1991; Esposito, 1991) and concludes that democracy already exists in the Muslim world, "whether the word democracy is used or not" (Esposito, 2002). In *Islam and Democracy*, Esposito and co-author John Voll, question Western attempts to monopolize the definition of democracy and suggest the very concept shifts meanings over time and place. They argue that every culture can mold an independent model of democratic government, which may or may not correlate to the Western liberal idea (Esposito and Voll, 1996).

While most academic debates do not exit the classroom, the debate over the compatibility of Islam and democracy affects policy. According to Feldman (2003), the Islamist threat is illusionary. He argues that Islamist movements should have a chance to govern. He concludes with the prescription that U.S. policymakers should adopt an inclusive attitude toward political Islam. "An established religion that does not coerce religious belief and that treats religious minorities as equals may be perfectly compatible with democracy" Feldman (2003).

Ironically, while Western scholars demonstrate the compatibility of Islam and democracy, prominent Muslim scholars argue democracy to be incompatible with their religion. They base their conclusion on two foundations: first, the conviction that Islamic law regulates the believer's activities in every area of life, and second, that the Muslim society of believers will attain their entire goals only if the believers walk in the path of God (Jedanne, 1990). Hasan al-Banna (1978), sought to purge Western influences. He taught that Islam was the only solution and that democracy amounted to infidelity to Islam. In a similar vein, Mawdudi (1976), while used by Esposito, argued that Islam was the antithesis of any secular Western democracy that based sovereignty upon the people and rejected the basics of Western democracy.

## Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

**Shura:** Rule in Islam is based on the concept of *Shura*, a term which has two meanings in Islamic governance: On the one hand, *Shura* is a referendum on which the majority of people agrees, and is the basic method for choosing the ruler in Islam. On the other hand, it is the means to approve the ruler's decisions. This advisory board (*al-majlis ash-Shura*), which advises the ruler, is a group of elected experts. The task of such groups is to observe and oversee the ruler (*murāqabat as-sultān*). They are in this position to form an opinion of the ruler

and his rule, and to control any aspirations he may have to override the rights of the people. They must be aware of the variations in these rights within ethnic, cultural and environmental norms. This system is like that being implemented in America today. The judicial system acts to check the executive and legislative branches, ensuring fair and correct implementation of law. (Kabbani, 2002).

Furthermore, *Shura* is to seek the opinion of knowledgeable people. In other words, it is to poll the opinion of the nation or its representatives over its issues (Abd-al-Salam, 2010). Therefore, Muslims took *Shura* as one of the principles and bases of governance. Mature Muslims elect those who they deem worthy of power and governance. What stresses this fact is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not leave a written text, nor did he name his successor. Rather, he made it up to consultation among Muslims. Abu Wa'il said: It was said to Ali ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him): Don't you name your successor? He said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) did not name his successor, so I will not. However, if Allah wants good for people, He will make them choose the best from among themselves, as He made them choose the best after their Prophet died." (Al-Hakim, 405H). *Shura* is one of the basic fundamentals of the Islamic political system. It extended to include all the affairs of Muslims. Thus, the Islamic state might have preceded the modern democratic systems with regard to the necessity of unanimity over choosing the one who runs its affairs and cares for its interests, something which stresses the value and effectiveness of unanimity among Muslims (Al-Nabarawi, 1998).

**Democracy:** In any discussion concerning democracy it is essential to define the term and set a standard for what constitutes a democratic system. Scholars have not been subtle about their debate over the requirements of democracy, but nevertheless they have found some common ground in the institution of elections. Citizen participation through elections is one of the most important indicators for a democratic system, but it is not sufficient because even authoritarian regimes may hold elections and feign democracy. For the purpose of this study, two important questions must be answered about democracy: First, what constitutes a democratic system and second, is the concept of democracy dichotomous or graded. In other words, are political systems either democratic or non-democratic, or are they either *more* democratic or *less* democratic.

The answer to the first question is that different scholars and theorists present different criteria for what constitutes a democratic system. Within this paradigm, the focus will be on a procedural, minimalist definition of a democracy which presumes "fully contested elections with full suffrage and the absence of massive fraud, combined with effective guarantees of civil liberties, including freedom of speech, assembly, and association" (Al-Shirazi, 1999). As for the second question, "the distinction between democracy and non-democracy should be treated as dichotomous. Hence, the essential initial task is to establish exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of democracy and non-democracy" (Al Braizat, 2002). To him, there is a fine line between what a democratic system is and what is not, and that is where the concept of democracy is dichotomous. But he also suggests that once a country is deemed democratic, a graded evaluation of its level of democracy can be applied to it. "Thus, what makes democracy

*possible* should not be mixed up with what makes democracy *more democratic*." (Collier and Robert, 1999).

Therefore, following the above logic, two procedures must take place when evaluating democratic development in any region around the world: Is that region democratic based on a procedural, minimalist definition of democracy and if it is democratic, *how* democratic is it? In this essay, these two procedures will be applied to Muslim countries to evaluate their stance on democracy as well as their level of democracy.

**Leadership:** Leadership is defined as "a process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task" (Chemers, 1997). Leadership is a holistic spectrum that can arise from higher levels of physical power, need to display power and control others, force superiority, ability to generate fear, or group-member's need for a powerful group protector. It can also develop via superior mental energies, superior motivational forces, perceivable in communication and behaviors, lack of fear, courage, determination, encapsulated in Psycho-energetic Leadership; higher abilities in managing the overall picture and specialized tasks. And finally, higher level of values, wisdom, and spirituality, especially where any Leader derives its Leadership from a unique mix of one or more of the former factors" (Trevisani, 2009). Studies of leadership have produced theories involving traits, situational interaction, function, behavior, power, vision and values, —charismatic, and intelligence, among others. However, the concept of leadership has changed over time. In the past, we have been told that leaders are born. This began with the premise that there was a trait that marked a leader, and that originally that trait was hereditary (Lundy, 1986). The search for the characteristics or traits of leaders has continued for centuries. Philosophical writings have explored the question "What qualities distinguish an individual as a leader?" Underlying this quest was the assumption that leadership is rooted in the characteristics that certain individuals possess. This idea that leadership is based on individual attributes is known as the "trait theory of leadership". As a result of the problems of relying solely on heredity to determine leadership, we shifted from trait to charisma as a basic determinant of leadership. This has also failed the test of reality as we found situations where less charismatic leaders succeeded where charismatic individuals have failed (Lippit, 1998).

The Situational Theory also appeared as a reaction to the trait theory of leadership. This theory assumes that different situations call for different characteristics; according to this group of theories, no single optimal psychographic profile of a leader exists. According to the theory, "what an individual actually does when acting as a leader is in large part dependent upon characteristics of the situation in which he functions." (Hemphill, 1949). Some theorists started to synthesize the trait and situational approaches. Building upon the research of Lewin *et al.* (1939), academics began to normalize the descriptive models of leadership climates, defining three leadership styles and identifying which situations each style works better in. The authoritarian leadership style, for example, is approved in periods of crisis but fails to win the "hearts and minds" of followers in day-to-day management; the democratic leadership style is more adequate in situations that require consensus building; finally, the laissez-faire leadership style is appreciated for the degree of freedom it provides, but as the leaders do not "take charge", they can be perceived as a failure

in protracted or thorny organizational problems (Wormer et. al., 2007). Thus, theorists defined the style of leadership as contingent to the situation, which is sometimes, classified as contingency theory.

**Esposito's Theoretical paradigm:** It has become a universal phenomenon in social sciences and humanities for concepts to be investigated or examined precisely within a paradigm. This is done mainly to achieve two very important purposes. On the one hand, placing a concept under investigation within a paradigm, to a large extent, clears obscurities in understanding the concept; while on the other, it places the concept under examination on a solid pedestal, as it drives the researcher far away from falling into analysis paralysis. Though, there are several theories, just as there are several Islamic and Western scholars, which have been used to explain the compatibility of the Islamic *Shura* principle with the Western democratic ethos. Such theories, includes the Islamic democratic theory, the Liberal democratic theory, and the Esposito's theory.

This study is however discussed within the Esposito's theoretical paradigm. To this theorist, the theory builds its arguments upon tendentious assumptions and platitudes such as "democracy has many and varied meanings; every culture will mold an independent model of democratic government; and there can develop a religious democracy." (Esposito, 1992). He argues that "Islamic movements have internalized the democratic discourse through the concepts of *Shura* [consultation], *ijma'* [consensus], and *ijtihad* [independent interpretive judgment]" (Esposito and Piscatory, 1991), and concludes that democracy already exists in the Muslim world, "whether the word democracy is used or not." (Esposito, 2002). Esposito and co-author John Voll, further question Western attempts to monopolize the definition of democracy and suggest the very concept shifts meanings over time and place. They argue that every culture can mold an independent model of democratic government, which may or may not correlate to the Western liberal idea (Voll and Esposito, 1996). Since the concept of Islamic *Shura* system and the Liberal democratic process cannot be well discussed in isolation of the concept of Islamic democracy, issued around the compatibility and workability of Islam and democracy, working this paper within the Esposito's theoretical paradigm appears uncompromising.

## METHODOLOGY

While the paper adopts the use of the qualitative secondary data sourced via literatures from journals, textbooks, other literary materials relevant to the subject matter; and personal observation, the researcher made use of the qualitative and analytical technique to compare the Islamic *Shura* principles and the Western liberal democratic ethos. Through the adoption of this comparative techniques, critically and historically approached, the study is availed the opportunity of forging a synergism that could produce a credible leader as well as good governance.

### Democratic Ethos in Islam

Legal scholar L. Ali Khan argues that Islam is fully compatible with democracy. Khan provides a critique of liberal democracy and secularism. He presents the concept of "fusion state" in which religion and state are fused. There are no contradictions in God's universe, says Khan. Contradictions represent the limited knowledge that human beings have. According to the Quran and the Sunnah, Muslims are fully capable of preserving spirituality and self-rule (Sachedina, 2001). Muslim democrat,

Ahamad Mousalli (2001) argues that concepts in the Quran point towards some form of democracy, or at least away from despotism. These concepts include *Shura* (consultation), *ijma*(consensus), *al-hurriyya* (freedom), *al-huquq al-shar'iyya* (legitimate rights). For example, *Shura* (Al-Imran- Quran 3:159, Ash-*Shura*- Quran 42:38) may include electing leaders to represent and govern on the community's behalf. Government by the people is not therefore necessarily incompatible with the rule of Islam, whilst it has also been argued that rule by a religious authority is not the same as rule by a representative of God.

Al-Farabi (c. 872-950), theorized an ideal Islamic state which he compared to Plato's *The Republic* (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Al-Farabi departed from the Platonic view in that he regarded the ideal state to be ruled by the prophet, instead of the philosopher king envisaged by Plato. Al-Farabi argued that the ideal state was the city-state of Medina when it was governed by Muhammad, as its head of state, as he was in direct communion with God whose law was revealed to him. In the absence of the prophet, Al-Farabi considered democracy as the closest to the ideal state, regarding the republican order of the Rashidun Caliphate as an example within early Muslim History. However, he also maintained that it was from democracy that imperfect states emerged, noting how the republican order of the early Islamic Caliphate of the Rashidun caliphs was later replaced by a form of government resembling a monarchy under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties (Bontekoe and Stepaniants, 1997).

Another Muslim scholar and thinker, Muhammed Asad (1961), viewed democracy as perfectly compatible with Islam. He notes: "Viewed from this historical perspective, democracy as conceived in the modern West is infinitely nearer to the Islamic than to the ancient Greek concept of Liberty for Islam maintains that all human beings are socially equal and must, therefore, be given the same opportunities for development and self-expression. On the other hand, Islam makes it incumbent upon Muslims to subordinate their decisions to the guidance of the Divine Law revealed in the Qur'an and exemplified by the Prophet: an obligation which imposes definite limits on the community's right to legislate and denies to the 'will of the people' that attribute of sovereignty which forms so integral a part of the western concept of democracy"

Abdul Al'a Maududi (1960), conceived of an "Islamic State" that would be an "Islamic democracy" and would eventually "rule the earth". The antithesis of secular Western democracy, it would follow an all-embracing Sharia law, but would be a "theo-democracy", not a theocracy, because its rule would be based on the entire Muslim community (pious Muslims who followed sharia), not the ulama (Islamic scholars) (Ullah, 2014). Following the Arab spring, Olivier Roy (2012) has described political Islam as "increasingly interdependent" with democracy, such that "neither can now survive without the other".

### Shura as Practiced in Islam

From the beginning, Islam has mandated democracy through a *shūrā* (elected council of leaders), a process through which people sit together, consult with one another, and select one person to represent them. This process was recently employed in Afghanistan where, according to a fifteen-century old tradition, the people choose representatives who then gathered to choose not only a leader, but a cabinet and national

assembly. The recent *loya jirga* that confirmed Hamid Karzai as President of Afghanistan demonstrated once again that Islamic rule is based on democratic choice. A clear example of democracy's role in Islam is manifest in the Prophet's (peace be upon him) passing without appointing a successor to rule the Muslim state. He intentionally left it to the Muslims to come together to make this crucial decision based on what he had taught them (Kabbani, 2002).

Note that the Prophet never gave a single word or sign indicating who his successor would be, and in the meeting which took place to elect the caliph, the Companions were in utter disagreement as to who should succeed the Prophet, but in the end, they were able to choose Abu Bakr as-Siddiq by the consensus of the majority. There were three groups who differed in who should succeed the Prophet. These were the Ansar, Muhajirun and Ali's supporters. The disagreement did not last long, as through *Shura* the three groups quickly reached the consensus that Abu Bakr had the highest credentials to take the reins of leadership. The majority voted for him, and the Islamic precedent for peaceful transition between rulers was introduced. Once the majority had decided, the individual citizens ratified the selection by pledging their allegiance one-by-one to the new head of state (Mahamud, 1994).

In electing a candidate from among the three parties vying for succession, the first, most exemplary Muslims imprinted their stamp of religious authenticity on the electoral system. The fact that the Companions (*Sahaba*) did not establish a monarchy or a dictatorship irrevocably demonstrates that leadership in Islam is the choice of the people. Once a selection is made by the *Shura* council, each individual Muslim has the option to accept their choice or not. This is known as taking a pledge of allegiance (*baya*). If a group feels the choice was made unjustly, they may refuse to accept it and form an opposition party. In the end however, a judge accepted by both sides must make a final arbitration and choose between the two parties based on the validity of their claims (Kabbani, 2002).

The executive aspect of governance is also conducted through consultation. The ruler, chosen by the *Shura* and confirmed by the citizen's individual pledge of allegiance, is obliged to consult on executive decisions. He therefore consults with a council, parliament or advisory group whose specific role is to advise. Whenever the Prophet had to make a decision that would affect the Muslim nation in whole or part, he gathered his followers to conduct a *Shura*. In one instance, before the onset of a battle, one of the companions asked the Prophet if the location of the Muslim camp should be chosen through Divine inspiration or consultation. The Prophet answered that it should be the product of consultation, and proceeded to follow the group's recommendation to settle beside the nearest water well (Al-Mallah, 2011).

Umar, the second caliph, said, "Whoever is chosen by the people after me will be the caliph, and you people must listen to him and obey him" (Sahih Bukhari). Upon Umar's passing, the *Shura* chose Uthman, and after Uthman's assassination, they chose Ali.

#### ***Shura and Western Democracy: Synergism for Good Governance and Credible Leadership***

One of the most highly cherished ethos's of western democracy which is very much in line with the Islamic mode of governance is '*Shura*', which as discussed earlier in this paper has two meanings in Islam. In the first instance, it is agreed that

'*Shura*' remains a basic means through which leaders are elected in Islam. It is also the means to approve the ruler's decisions, a consultative council. It is worthy of note to state that this advisory council (*al-majlis ash-shūrā*), which advises the leader, is a group of elected experts, people of wisdom and enviable characters in the society. Another very important democratic principle congruent to the Islamic governmental system is 'equality'. In a secular democratic set-up, equality implies 'one man, one vote'. As good as this method is, it is hampered by the fact that the vote of a morally upright and God-fearing individual has the same weight with those of a political thug, hooligan, and an ex-convict, and which are manipulated in most cases by politicians to rig themselves into office (Adebayo, 2010).

However, the Islamic concept of equality in a political set-up implies the choice of leaders from elections carried out by people's representatives who should be people of proven integrity, righteous and God-fearing. The issue of canvassing for vote as a process of democracy has been exposed to criticisms by scholars. Apart from unhealthy rivalries which ensued among contestants, the process, because of its materialistic and secular nature, encourages money politics and godfatherism, which consequently breeds all forms of electoral malpractices, hooliganism and other political crises (Raheem, 2004).

From the foregoing, it has been discovered that Western democracy has a number of shortcomings, despite its laudable praises by western scholars; and that these pitfalls have been responsible for the emergence of non-credible leaders in some instances, especially in the developing worlds of Africa, Latin America and the Asia. If Islam, through *Shura* could guarantee and uphold good governance via the consultative council and produces credible leaders, while secularism renders democracy ineffective to guarantee comprehensive social justice and protection of the people, we should not be out of order to call for a synergy of the Islamic *Shura* system of electing and supporting leaders and the western democratic process of electing leaders. Culturing a synergy between the two seeming far apart concepts must have to entail a conscious effort of injecting the *Shura* principles into the already secular western democratic culture that has permeated almost all nations, north and south of the globe. It is expected that a synergy so formed will on the one hand promote good governance, credible leadership and eschew all the negativities that comes with the over secularization of the western democratic culture.

After all, the influence of Islam on the West has been widely acknowledged by both Muslims and non-Muslims. The influence was all embracing, as it covered all aspects of the Western life. Considering the great influence of Muslims on the Western Europe, Qutb (1975), recognizes contributions of Muslims to the modern world. He avers that: Many other effects of Islamic civilization shed their rays of light on Europe. Although there is not a particular aspect of the European blossoming whose origin cannot safely be ascribed to the influence of Islamic culture. In a similar vein, Briffault (1919) is said to have confirmed the Muslims' contributions to the Western world when he wrote: There is not a single aspect of European growth in which the influence of Islamic civilization is not traceable. It is highly possible that but for the Arabs, modern European civilization would never have arisen at all.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has discussed the concept of *Shura* as exemplified in the Islamic democracy and the Western democratic system. It equally revealed how the secular nature of the concept of democracy helps explain the dichotomy between it and the Islamic system of government. The paper contends that a lot had been borrowed from the Islamic system of government to enrich Western democracy. If truly it remains uncontroverted that the Muslim world has contributed immensely to the intellectual rejuvenation of the Western world, and that good governance and credible leadership has continued to elude us in the face of over secularization of the western democracy, with its attendant perennial pitfalls, one can conveniently conclude that the *Shura* system of consultation and electing leaders as laid down by Islam and practised by the companions of the prophet, if well synergized with the liberal democracy will promote good governance and credible leadership.

In the light of the above, we strongly recommend that a synergy that will encourage the adaptation of the *Shura* system of electing leaders and consultation, blended with the existing secular democratic ethos's, while eschewing all inherent and perceived negativities, that comes with the two concepts be pursued. If this recommendation is concertedly adhere to, we are sure to cruise the path of good governance and credible leadership.

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